

Random Encounters

Pets of Any Stripe

By Robert Wiese



Celeste Blue-Skye, Proprietor and Con Artist

Celeste Blue-Skye is the current alias of Alisha, a young orphan from a port city far from her current center of operations. Alisha lost her parents when she was three years old. She was put in an orphanage when they died, but the place did not agree with her. She left one night to make her own way and spent the rest of her youth on the streets. Blessed with cute good looks and a gift for acting, she eventually realized that she could succeed better through swindling than through outright thievery, and this decision turned her whole life around. By the time she was 18, she had mastered the art of altering her appearance, and she had developed a fluidity of personality that allows her to assume any role almost instantly. Now 26, she travels in her current guise as "Celeste," an adventurer. She does not adventure so much as look for opportunities to swindle people.



Celeste is cute rather than beautiful. She stands just over 5 feet tall, possesses a trim figure, keeps her blond hair short, and has indeterminate gray-blue eyes. When she is herself (in other words, not engaged in a swindle), she wears stylish but inexpensive clothing and makes sure that she can move freely in whatever she wears. She had to run for it enough times in her youth to make loose clothing a habit. She has an excitable temper, and her emotions show clearly in the sparkle of her eyes or the tone of her voice. During swindles and business deals, she can maintain a rigid control on her temper, and at those times the only emotions that show are the ones she wants to display. She is very concerned with the lives of others and is usually quite interested in what people around her are doing. Her curiosity is not feigned, but she does turn anything she learns to her advantage.

The pet shop is the embodiment of a dream for her. Not only does it involve making sure that animals get good homes, but it does so through very little cost or effort. It is also legal, which means that though she could be confronted by a large number of druids for doing this, she cannot be arrested. Ah, technicalities. She likes this city very much, because while it has an air of lawfulness and safety, illegal activity thrives as well. It is the best of both worlds as far as she is concerned. In addition, the large trading business that passes through the city ensures that she will remain in business for years to come.

In the evening she puts her bardic gifts to good use, since she likes to entertain children. Not surprisingly, she sells a number of small pets during these concerts, as well.

Celeste Blue-Skye: Female human Rog 2/Brd 9; CR 11; Medium-size humanoid; HD 2d6 plus 9d6; hp 49; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Atk +9/+4 melee (1d6+3/18-20, rapier), or +9 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); SA sneak attack +1d6; SQ bardic knowledge +12, bardic music (countersong, *fascinate*, inspire competence, inspire courage, inspire greatness, *suggestion*) 9/day, evasion, traps; AL CN; SV Fort +3, Ref +11, Will +8; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 21.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +8, Bluff +25, Decipher Script +13, Diplomacy +24, Disguise +21, Forgery +8, Gather Information +23, Hide +7, Intimidate +11, Listen +9, Move Silently +7, Open Lock +7, Perform +19, Sense Motive +11, Spellcraft +9, Spot +9, Use Magic Device +14; Alertness, Charlatan*, Persuasive*, Spell Focus (Enchantment), Trustworthy*.

Bardic Knowledge: Celeste can make a bardic knowledge check with a bonus of +12 to see whether she knows some relevant information about local notable people, legendary items, or noteworthy places.

Bardic Music: Celeste can use her song or poetics to produce the following magical effects on those around her.

Countersong (Su): Celeste can counter magical effects that depend on sound by making a Perform check for each round of countersong. Any creature within 30 ft. of her that is affected by a sonic or language-dependent magical attack may use Celeste's Perform check result in place of its saving throw if desired. Countersong lasts for 10 rounds.

Fascinate (Su): Celeste can cause a single creature within 90 ft. that can see and hear her to become fascinated with her. Celeste's Perform check result is the DC for the opponent's Will save. Any obvious threat breaks the effect. Fascination lasts 9 rounds.

Inspire Competence (Su): An ally within 30 ft. who can see and hear Celeste gets a +2 competence bonus on skill checks with a particular skill for as long as he or she can hear the music.

Inspire Courage (Su): Allies who can hear Celeste receive a +2 morale bonus on saves against charm and fear effects and a +1 morale bonus on attack and weapon damage rolls. The effect lasts for 5 rounds after the ally can no longer hear Celeste.

Inspire Greatness (Su): After hearing Celeste sing for a full round, a creature within 30 ft.

gains +2 Hit Dice (d10s that grant temporary hit points), a +2 competence bonus on attacks, and a +1 competence bonus on Fortitude saves. The effect lasts until 5 rounds after the creature can no longer hear Celeste.

Suggestion (Sp): Celeste can make a suggestion (as the spell) to a creature she has already fascinated. A Will save (DC 18) negates the effect.

Evasion (Ex): If exposed to any effect that normally allows a character to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, Celeste takes no damage with a successful saving throw.

Bard Spells Known (3/5/4/3; save DC 15 + spell level, or 17 + spell level for Enchantment spells): 0 -- *detect magic, ghost sound, light, mage hand, open/close, read magic*; 1st -- *charm person, mage armor, sleep, ventriloquism*; 2nd -- *detect thoughts, enthrall, invisibility, suggestion*; 3rd -- *charm monster, emotion, haste*.

Languages: Common, Dwarven, Elven, Gnome.

Possessions: Rapier, light crossbow, case with 10 bolts, *hat of disguise, ring of protection +2, cloak of Charisma +2, brooch of shielding, circlet of persuasion*.

Feats from *Song and Silence*:

Charlatan: +2 bonus on Bluff and Disguise checks.

Persuasive: +2 on all Bluff and Intimidate checks.

Trustworthy: +2 on all Diplomacy and Gather Information checks.

Bringing the Parts Together

If you want to introduce Celeste briefly before making greater use of her, feel free to use her in a city tavern as the entertainment for the evening. Her performance is very nice, and she usually leads with a song or two, fills in with a story, and ends with an uplifting or boot-stomping round or well-known song that the audience can join in on.

Coming in Part 3 of Pets of Any Stripe

Maephus Ibonn is adept with spells. Read more about him next time!

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